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tea and Peruvian bark, are interestingly described : the temple and worship of Jagannath, the Christianization of the Kols, the remnants of the native system of Sanskrit instruction, and the like, come up for notice in their proper connection.

A uniform and well-considered method of writing proper names has been adopted throughout, and will doubtless help efficiently toward putting an end to the prevailing confusion.

4.—*Poems and Ballads.* By ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE. (Second Series.) New York : R. Worthington, 750 Broadway. 1878. 12mo, pp. 296.

MR. SWINBURNE has given sufficient proof of native genius and masterly art in his previous works to make his readers open this new volume with eager anticipation of charming verse as well as of original creation. But, strange to say, the first impression of the book is of its vagueness and obscurity. The language is simple enough, the words are exquisitely put together, and the verse generally flows like music, but it is often hard to tell what it all means. Several of these pieces, such as "Choriambics," "A Song in Season," and "Two Leaders," give at first no idea of what the writer had in his mind, yet there is no obscure word or intricate sentence to puzzle us, but the haze is over the whole poem, and you see as the blind man, men as trees walking ; and you doubt whether the fault is in your eyes or in the landscape. Probably this difficulty in understanding the poet comes from two causes—one from his way of thinking or of failing to think, and the other from his style of expression.

He does not seem to care to think distinctly, but prefers to live in the dreamy region of sentiment and emotion, fancy and reverie. Thus, run through his thrice three "Triads," beginning thus :

"The word of the sun to the sky,
The word of the wind to the sea,
The word of the moon to the night,
What may it be?"

You note that all these various objects look each other in the face without saying what they mean, nor does the poet tell you what they mean, nor does he make it clear why he does not tell you why you can never know :

"Till the secret be secret no more
In the light of one hour as it flies,
Be the hour as of suns that expire
Or suns that rise."

Of course so careful and accomplished a writer means something in what he says, but he seems to make his thought as shadowy and dreamy as possible ; and evidently his false and bad philosophy has infected his poetry with its Buddhist nihilism, and led him to measure inspiration by its fall into the Nirvāna of trance, rather than by its rise into the heaven of thought and life. His poem "Sestina" contains a fair description of this torpor that has settled down upon his intellect and will :

"This was the measure of my soul's delight ;
It had no power of joy to fly by day,
Nor part in the large lordship of the light ;
But in a secret moon-beholden way
Had all its will of dream and pleasant night
And all the love and life that sleepers may."

The second cause of his haziness is apparently in his turn of expression, especially in his passion for melody above all other graces and lights of poetry. For him articulate speech is almost lost in song, and his Muse has tone rather than voice, and she might sometimes do almost as well with a flute or harp as with words. In fact, several of these pieces had better be played upon an instrument, than read or sung ; for the thought is so much adrift, and in a fog upon the waves of melody, that it is better to let the thought go, and to hear the waves play and dance at their own sweet or wild will. Some critics may call this a gain, because they say music is better than speech ; but true art does not agree to this, and it is the rational word and not mere tone that gives man his distinctive mark, and lifts the poet so near to the Eternal Mind.

It is the boast of Swinburne's school to be free from the old-fashioned rule that compelled the poet to have a purpose in his work. Art for its own sake, and not for anything outside, this is the new motto, and there is a certain truth in it, so far as it bids art be true to itself and to its subject, and not to confound its office with the preacher's task. Yet every artist will have some aim in what he does, even if it is his aim not to have any ; and Swinburne and his set are evidently drifting toward aims and notions that are neither lovely, wise, nor good, according to the code of the great masters of song. There are some things in this volume that are not cloudy, and these are not by any means the best things. The clearest passages are the pictures of love or rather of lust ; and, while these erotic verses may be beautiful art to the writer, they are bad morals to the average reader, and are likely to be remembered when the

lines of hazy sentiment are forgotten. Pure taste may delight in such pictures of Iseult's complexion and eyes as these verses give us :

"Such maiden heat, as if a rose's blood
Beat in the live heart of a lily-bud."

And again of her eyes he speaks :

"As the wave's subtler emerald is pierced through
With the utmost heaven's inextricable blue."

Yet there are other passages that have no beauty to redeem their passion ; and one poem, from the French of Villon, is too filthy to be published here in this "sad, bad, glad, mad brother's name," being only bad, and not at all glad, as the translator says.

Better things may be hoped of Swinburne ; and such pieces as "A Forsaken Garden," "Four Songs of Four Seasons," and some others, have his old force and point with maturer thought. Such patriotic poems too as "The White Czar," "Rizpah," and "Kosuth," show that, when he gets mad with Russia, he speaks out his mind, and leads us to believe that he may wake up from his trance, and with sounder thinking and more wholesome action take the place that belongs to him among the great masters of English song. He begins the volume with a hymn to Apollo, and this piece, with his two sonnets to Giordano Bruno, whom he classes, not wholly justly, with Lucretius and Shelley, indicates the pronounced paganism of his philosophy, if any philosophy he has. Other pieces, such as his "Inferiæ," and his "Winter in Northumberland," touch more hopeful chords, that come near Tennyson's ideal strain, and relieve us somewhat from the fear that Aphrodite rather than Apollo has him in keeping now.

5.—*Tropical Nature, and other Essays.* By ALFRED R. WALLACE, author of "The Malay Archipelago," "The Geographical Distribution of Animals," etc. London : Macmillan & Co. 1878. 8vo, pp. xiii.—566.

THIS book does not claim to be so elaborate and commanding a treatise as the author's recent work on "The Geographical Distribution of Animals," which made an epoch in that branch of natural history, but it is in its way quite as interesting and instructive, carrying out as it does the principles of that work, and adding facts and descriptions full of attraction and instruction. The first three chapters, which treat of the climate, vegetation, and animal life, of the